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THE
DESTRUCTION OF SIN.

AN ESSAY

WRITTEN FOR THE BRANTFORD EVANGELICAL ALLI-
ANCE, AND READ BEFORE THAT BODY

BY THE

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THE DESTRUCTION OF SIN.

SIN is doubtless an interloper in this world, and serves no purpose but that of evil. It was introduced into the world by the Devil, the prince of evil, and, as Christians, we believe that "Jesus Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the Devil."

We look forward to the day when sin, as a fact of experience, shall be a thing of the past. We expect some day that the ordinary and normal condition of the soul shall be, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Then "The God of peace shall have bruised Satan under our feet," "And the very God of peace shall have sanctified us wholly," and "will preserve us blameless." Then "perfect love will have cast out fear," and "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, shall have cleansed us from all sin," and, as a result, "Our peace shall be as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea," "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and confidence forever."

When that happy experience is realized we shall keep the commandment, "Be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, ye shall be holy

for I am holy." And the words of the blessed Jesus will be fulfilled, "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." And God and good men can then say of us, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life."

This vigorous and exultant spiritual life, and this deadness to sin, is begun, and perpetuated by following the direction of the Holy Scriptures, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In discussing the subject of The Destruction of Sin I want first to get as near each other's views as possible, or to get on some common ground of belief; so that we may start together in search for the truth, even if we have to part company afterwards. That there is a difference of opinion among Christians as to God's method of destroying sin in a believer, must be recognized if we would make an honest effort to lessen the distance between us, and draw nearer the truth, and hence nearer to each other.

This difference of opinion is partly caused by misapprehension of each other's views. It is really remarkable how little we know of certain theories, which we take upon us at times to vehemently oppose. Many of the bitter, religious controversies of the present century would have been prevented if there had been a better understanding between opponents of each other's theories. And this is seen in no question more than the one now under discussion.

Another cause of difference and controversy is, in not

understanding the precise meaning of each other's language. A correct speaker has no difficulty in making himself understood, when speaking of material matters of fact ; or on subjects that are recognized by the senses, or on subjects in which the hearer has experience in common with the speaker ; but the moment he discourses on the spiritual life, or enters the region of mental or moral philosophy, or attempts to explain the nature of mind, or the laws governing the various mental states, or attempts to analyze the will and fix responsibility ; that moment he is misunderstood, and men draw off from him, and from each other, and form themselves into parties and different schools of thought.

This remark applies especially when used in connection with the possibilities of Christian experience, and the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul of man. Much, indeed most, of the language used in describing the work of God in the soul, is necessarily figurative ; and it is difficult to use a figure of speech on these subtle and delicate subjects, that will convey one's exact idea, and not be capable of being construed to mean what was not intended.

This is one prolific cause of infidel attack on the Bible. You who have read Tom Payne's "Age of Reason" know how he burlesques Christianity and blasphemes the atonement by calling it "The Butcher Theory" of salvation. He says, Christians daub themselves with the blood of a murdered man and call themselves holy. He thus perverts the teaching of the Bible, and slanders Christian testimony, by taking figures of speech and typical language in their material sense.

When a material illustration is used of a spiritual subject, it must be taken, not only in its figurative sense, but with the exact shade of meaning intended. The Bible description of the depravity of man, and of the work of grace in the heart, and the triumphs of faith, is largely in figurative, or metaphorical language, and some Christians, not recognizing this, "have erred concerning the faith."

In describing God's method for the destruction of sin in the human heart, the language must necessarily be of the character just mentioned. Such terms as "the destruction of sin," and "cleansing," or "the death of sin," "The old man being crucified," "the roots of sin being pulled up," "the death of the old nature," "the old man of sin," and many others, are true only when used in one sense, and their application is limited and in no case absolute. Then let us make an honest effort to understand each other. Undoubtedly, when this is done, there will be real differences of opinion as to when, and how God purposes to give us the complete victory over sin, or to eject the man of sin out of the heart. But the chasm between us, I do not think is as deep and wide as some suppose, and we can, at least, get near enough to look with a loving eye into each other's theological faces, and clearly see the features of our different opinions on this vital subject. Upon close examination, I earnestly hope we shall find that our points of disagreement are far less numerous than our points of agreement.

The theory now advocated is that theory indicated by the Scripture quotations just read. It is my firm opinion that God has provided a complete remedy for sin, and He

means that "where sin abounds grace shall much more abound," here and now.

Whatever opinions we may have about Christ's imputed righteousness; there ought to be no two opinions concerning Christ's imparted righteousness; through the which a man's sinful nature is obliterated, and his old sinful self destroyed, and he possesses "the mind which was in Christ Jesus." It is not meant, that this deadness to sin or complete spiritual healing, is an experience that one must have in order to constitute him a child of God; on the contrary, it is maintained that none but a child of God feels the need of such a condition, and none but those who are under grace can exercise faith for such victory.

First.—We are all agreed that, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Nothing unholy can enter Heaven. The souls who pass its portals, and take up their abode in that celestial land, are as white as the driven snow, and as pure as the angels before the throne of God, who serve Him day and night.

All Christendom, Catholics as well as Protestants will, I think, endorse this statement, so that here we have a common ground to stand upon. Sin is to be destroyed, the human heart is to be free from the power and indwelling of sin, Jesus Christ is to destroy the works of the Devil, the victories of the Cross are to be complete in the case of each individual who believes in Jesus; human nature is to be brought back to its original oneness with God, and grace is to triumph eternally.

But having agreed on this fact of victory over sin, we

immediately differ as to when it is to be achieved, and the power through which it is accomplished.

1. To the credit of the Catholic Church, be it said, that she makes full provision for the purification of all her sons and daughters before they enter Heaven. Knowing that men must be holy before entering that pure and holy abode, and seeing that the majority of her members live and die without this fitness for Heaven, she has invented a purgatory after death, and while passing through the fires, which her imagination has placed in this state of existence, souls are purged of all the dross of sin, and they come out pure gold and are "Made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Purified souls come from this preparatory state like the fertile imagination of Dante in "Purgatory and Paradise," pictures the three principal Graces:

"The one so ruddy, that her form had scarce
Been known in a furnace of clear flame;
The next did look, as if the flesh and bones
Were emerald; snow new fallen seemed the third."

Thus the Catholic theory of final purification is, that fire and punishment are the purifiers and not the blood of Jesus alone; but truth to tell, that Church is at least consistent, and leaves nothing unprovided for touching the final purification of her children.

2. Many Protestants in my opinion, are not nearly as consistent as Catholics, and are equally in error as to the means God proposes to use, for the destruction of sin, or the entire cleansing of the nature of believers before entering Heaven. Those who deny the possibility of a man having this experience in life, and say that it comes

to him at, or about the time of death, put themselves in a dilemma, from which I have never seen a way of escape.

1. Some hold the theory that sanctification or holiness is the climax of Christian growth and development, and when that state is reached, the Christian is like a ripe head of wheat, all ready for the garner. This state being the ultimatum of life, God then takes him home to Himself in Heaven.

A little thought will show us that the idea must be an error, as it confounds things that are different. The Bible presents two ideas concerning Christian character. the one has reference to its purity or holiness, and the other has reference to its growth or development.

The two ideas are as distinct as quality and quantity, or as physical health and physical weight and size. There may be as much water in one glass as another, but the one may be tainted with impurity and the other as clear as crystal. Two children of equal age and size, both having life, and perhaps, totally different as to physical health; the one may be diseased and the other robust with health. All that the healthy child needs is to grow and develop, but the sick child needs to be purified or healed of disease, as well as to grow to maturity; and the process to reach these different results are as different as the results themselves.

The theory under immediate consideration confounds disease with growth, and it does not harmonize with God's method of work either in nature or grace. Disease in the body needs to be driven out, as it is a foreign element, but nature has made full provision for healthy

growth until the maximum of physical development is reached.

Sin, that is, inbred sin; that state of sin in the soul which survives after conversion is no less a foreign element, and its effects upon the living Christian man is like dust in his eyes or disease in his body; and at times he struggles with more than mortal energy to free himself from its power. He finds Paul's description voices his experience, "Oh wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This growth or gradual sanctification theory in answer to this agonizing question would say, "The only way you can be rid of this dead body of sin is to grow it off;" but Paul answered his own question and said, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." So it appears that Jesus is our deliverer from inbred sin, as well as the great provider of pardon for our guilt.

As a matter of fact, the Bible nowhere holds up growth as a saviour from sin, but gives all the glory of salvation to Jesus. Sin is like the germ of diphtheria; water will not drown it; frost cannot kill it; vitriol cannot burn it, and fire is the only effectual means of its destruction. With a similar view of sin the Holy Ghost is represented under the figure of fire, and says, I will "thoroughly purge away thy dross and will take away thy tin." Time and growth make but little headway in the destruction of sin in the heart; as a rule the body of sin grows with the growth of the spiritual life, and the warfare between the two is often as great in a Christian of twenty or thirty years standing, as in the new born babe in Christ.

2. Others hold that this complete deliverance from sin will not take place until death.

This theory I believe, does not claim that entire sanctification, is the result of growth, but that, in some way, the final blow is then given to sin, and the dying Christian for the first time in his life, is delivered from the bondage of sin, and goes home a free man to Heaven.

If a Christian can only be made perfectly holy at death, then the work must either be a result of death, or the soul must then be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. If holiness is the result of death then that which is a result of sin, becomes also the destruction of its own cause; to which I should have no objection if it were true, and if, under the circumstances, it were not an absurdity.

What is this we call death when viewed in relation to the soul? If our theory of immortality be true and Scriptural, that the soul is entirely distinct from the body, and can live and act in its spiritual sphere apart from the body; if it be true that the soul is the I, myself, and that the body is no more a part of the essential man than other matter with which we come in contact; if these things be true, then by what process of reasoning can we prove that the death of this body works such a marvellous change in the moral quality of the soul? Death is simply a tenant stepping out of his house. Or does this death-sanctification go upon the idea that moral quality inheres in the body and not in the soul? This is the only logical refuge that can be taken and from it this unscriptural theory is easily driven.

The body is often the instrument of sin, but the soul

is always the responsible actor. One may as well blame the axe with which the burglar breaks into a house to commit robbery, as to blame the body for sin, or any of the members of the body. These members with which a man commits sin have no more thought, or moral quality, and hence no more responsibility, than the axe just referred to.

But it must be borne in mind that we are not discussing so much, when and how a man is saved from the act of sin; but when and how he is saved from the inbeing of sin.

Sin is a disease of the soul, and moral quality inheres in the spiritual nature only. The separation of a man's body from his soul can in the nature of things, effect no moral change whatever. If it be said that the body with its appetites and passions are a source of temptation, from which the soul is freed only by death; that these animal powers are of necessity, our masters in life, and compel us to have sinful thoughts and feelings, and that the body is thus a cause of imparting moral quality to the soul; then I answer, that it is undoubtedly true, that the body is a means of temptation; but to say, that a Christian man by the power of grace, cannot keep his bodily passions in their natural sphere, and use them only as the God of nature intended they should be used, is to speak very lightly of the omnipotent power of Jesus Christ, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and to debase Christian manhood to the lowest level.

The old heathen philosophers preached a grander salvation than this. A Christian who is still controlled by the animal, has learned but little of the power of grace

in the soul, and knows but little of the victories of faith.

But, again, if this death theory were true, how it would rob Jesus Christ of the glory of human salvation, and what a tremendous mistake the redeemed in Heaven have been making! Their song is "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Now, if death has anything to do with our cleansing from sin, then death should surely get some share of the praise.

But, my brethren, death has no part nor lot in the matter. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Evidently we are all agreed that Jesus is "the author and finisher of our faith." It is through His blood we get initial salvation, and it is His blood that cleanseth from ALL sin; that is, exterminates sin from the heart.

Now, then, if He can perform the work at death, why can He not do it, say an hour before death? And if an hour, why not a week? And if a week, why not a year, or in fact, any length of time?

3. It is to the law and the power of faith that we must look for soul purity, the same as we do for our justification. "It is not of works lest any man should boast," it cannot be accomplished by time nor by development, and as certainly not by death.

Jesus is our one only Saviour, and the simple condition upon which He performs His work, and accomplishes His wondrous purpose of destroying sin in the heart of

man is, that of faith. There are, I believe, but few of us, who make the practical use of faith which God intends and the Bible enjoins. Most of us are sound enough on the doctrine of justification by faith, and though we hold to a walk by faith as a theory, we practically depend on works; except, as we have a general faith in the goodness of God; and in His purpose and intent to guide us in our spiritual and temporal concerns. But, alas, to special and particular faith victories many Christians are strangers.

In this matter of inbred sin, manifested by our doubts and fears, our tendency to unbelief, the uprisings of unholy anger, impurity of motive, occasional coldness of heart, lack of devotional feelings; and other sinful tendencies and propensities; how few there are who expect to conquer by faith!

Paul prayed, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and then for fear some person would think this too big a prayer for God to answer, he adds in the very next sentence, "Faithful is he that calleth you who also WILL do it."

The majority, I fear, of even earnest Christians, are trying to accomplish this by a process of works and good resolutions; and are trusting to time; and finally, to death to finish this work; when Paul says "God will do it." Now, if it is God's work it will be accomplished in a man when he complies with the conditions, viz.: believes the promises of God with a living, or an appropriating faith. "This only would I learn of you, received ye the

Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit are ye made perfect by the flesh." It seems to me this question of Paul's is most pertinent, and bears directly on this subject, for the thing complained of is what hosts of people are now doing.

So long as a man believes that he cannot be holy while in the flesh, he certainly will not be, for the condition that God has attached to all the processes of salvation is that of faith; "According to your faith so be it unto you," is always the answer of God to a soul struggling for full salvation.

The measure of a man's faith is the measure of his experience, and of his spiritual triumphs. If he believes a certain amount of sin is necessary; that the Devil is stronger than Christ; that the flesh is mightier than grace; that the blood of Jesus Christ does not touch inbred sin, that is, does not cleanse from all sin—then certainly he will be bound to the dead body of sin for his natural life, and will writhe and groan in agony in consequence of his contact with this sin corpse, for the only knife which can cut the cords that bind them together is the knife of faith, and that he has thrown away. Jesus said, "All things are possible to him that believeth;" and the converse of this is true: nothing is possible to him who believeth not.

I confess I do not see how men can read the Bible and not see that this full salvation is provided for all who will accept of it by faith. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." That is, to save them from their sins, and from the condition of heart that produces sin.

To save sinners by making them saints, to turn bad men into good men, to redeem and sanctify human nature, to cleanse the heart, and make it a fit temple for the Holy Ghost.

It is said of Jesus, "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from ALL INIQUITY, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." I believe to-day the blessed Jesus is grieved at the unbelief of His own people, and He is saying to them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

Does not God say, "I will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul." And how dare we doubt it? Does He not also say, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. . . . I will also save you from all your uncleannesses."

How do these Scriptures harmonize with the astounding unbelief that I have often heard: that we cannot keep God's commandments; that they simply serve the purpose of showing us how weak we are; that they are a system of measurement, to show us how far we come short of the standard of perfect men? "As a man thinketh so he is," and such

a man certainly when put into the scales of God's moral and spiritual law, "will be found wanting," and when put under the Divine standard will be found short of moral stature.

If a man's moral and spiritual ideal is not nobler and more exalted, I do not wonder that his experience is that of perpetual sinning. But I am bold to say that such a faith, or rather the lack of faith, is a burlesque on Jehovah, and a slander upon the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and an insult to the Holy Ghost.

If it were true that God has given us commandments which we cannot keep, or which He cannot, or will not give us grace to keep, then He is worse than the Egyptian task-masters, who demanded from the Israelites bricks without furnishing them straw. What would we say of the parent who demanded of his son that he lift a weight of five hundred pounds, when he knew he could only lift one hundred pounds; and then the parent punishes the son for not doing what it was impossible for him to do? We would all say he was a monster. And shall we, dare we say that God is a hard task-master, giving us tasks of impossible performance, binding heavy burdens upon weak shoulders? Shall not the God of all the earth do right? And will He not always give us gracious ability when we lack natural ability, to perform every duty which He requires of us? Yes, my brethren, He will, and the Holy Scriptures abound in promises to that effect. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

If we but have a personal faith for a personal fulfilment of God's promises, we shall have perpetual victory over sin, subjectively and objectively.

I want to say something more concerning the enjoyment of this experience by faith. If received by faith, it is only retained in the same way. A single act of faith will not put us into possession of heart purity for all time, except that act of faith be a perpetual act. We are saved, moment by moment, by the faith of the Son of God. Like the little pebble at the bottom of the running brook, clean and white; so the sanctified soul by faith keeps under the blood, and the blood cleanseth, moment by moment.

Here is a text which contains the whole plan: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Here is the constant walk, in the light of faith, as a condition of the blood cleansing us momentarily. This Scripture, which is precept, promise and experience, all in one, is in the present tense forever, "The blood cleanseth." It cleanseth me now, and now, and now, perpetually.

There is no room for boasting or vain glory in such an experience, as there is no independent holiness apart from the blood, and the constant indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The glory is all given "to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us." The most profound humility comes with such an experience, and its possessor has solved John Wesley's paradox—

"Sink me into perfection's height."

And the words of Jesus are fulfilled: "He that humbleth

himself shall be exalted." The nearer a man gets to God, and the more he partakes of His holiness, the less he thinks of his own ability and worthiness. The higher a man lives in the heavenlies the lower sinks self.

Again, in this spiritual state, the faith act is as natural and spontaneous as breathing; the one requires as little conscious effort as the other; and notwithstanding we are saved by the moment, we are not under a constant strain and standing in jeopardy every hour. We are conscious that we retain physical life by breathing, and if we stop breathing we die, nevertheless breathing gives us little or no anxiety. Faith is soul breath, and the air it breathes is fragrant and delightful; so that constant faith brings constant joy and rest, as well as spiritual victory.

Second.—Having noticed that all Christians believe that sin will ultimately be destroyed in us, and having seen some of the opinions as to when and how that work will be accomplished, we will now consider some of the reasons why we do not all see that the experience is attainable by all Christians, here and now, by simple faith, just as the Bible declares.

1. Some include in their idea of holiness a freedom from normal bodily appetites and passions. With such an opinion it is no wonder that many do not believe the experience is for living men. There certainly is no Scriptural warrant for such an opinion, nor is there any good reason for it apart from the Scriptures.

The foundation of the opinion is a misconception of the two-fold nature of man, that of physical and spiritual; and an equal misconception of God's plan and purpose in investing our human natures with the animal

qualities referred to. We must bear in mind that the animal part of us is just as distinct from our souls, as the nature of any other animal is distinct from us.

Hence the fact that I have animal passion and appetite, be they ever so strong, does not of necessity affect the moral quality of my soul, any more than a vicious horse that I may be riding affects the character of the rider.

I can readily see, and by sad experience I know too well, how both the one and the other may lead me into sin, and thus affect my moral nature. I know my spiritual nature, if not under the dominion and power of faith, may be led into the commission of evil by my animal impulses; but the same thing is true of the vicious horse supposed; I may allow him to drive me into ungovernable rage and into inhuman cruelty. There is, however, no necessity that either of these evils happen, and the sanctified soul will make both temptations a means of grace to him rather than a means of sin.

We need further to remember that to predicate moral qualities of purely physical things is an improper use of language; as moral quality only inheres in the soul of man, and in purely moral beings. We may just as well speak of thought in a tree, as to speak of the body being either morally good or morally bad. Still further, if we are to invest the normal passions and appetites of our bodies with qualities good or bad, then I say they are good; and, as a matter of fact, in the sense that God pronounced all things good when He created them, they are good. Adam and Eve, while they were yet holy, had the animal nature just the same as afterwards. God in-

vested man with this nature, in order to carry out His eternal plans and purposes concerning the race ; and what God has called clean, what right have we to call common or unclean ?

No, my brethren, God does not propose to unman us, or to make us other than human, but He does propose to give such strength of purpose and moral purity to our souls that we shall use the most animal parts of our nature even, to His glory and praise only ; and not as the unwashed do, gratify a "fleshly carnal mind" with the lusts of the literal flesh. God proposes to give us such a grip upon the spiritual reins with which to control our animal natures, and give such strength to our moral muscles that we shall be able to guide and control the most fiery of our passions and appetites, as a skilful horseman guides well trained horses, be they ever so spirited. God proposes to give us soul purity, and then to put our bodies under the complete control of this sanctified spiritual nature.

2. Some include in their idea of holiness an experience incapable of feeling anger or indignation. Such an opinion is doubtless unscriptural, and such a state is contrary to a vigorous and healthy manhood. Through some cause or other, there is a tendency to magnify the gentler, or feminine virtues of the Christian character, and to minify the more sturdy, or masculine virtues. The sisterhood of graces, meekness, humility and gentleness have been so preached that our idea of a complete Christian character does not take in the brotherhood of graces : courage, boldness, and a burning indignation for all mean and devilish things. Indeed, I have known when

such feelings have been exhibited by saintly men, it has been taken as an evidence of carnality. There is a wicked anger, from which we must be delivered; but there is an holy anger which is capable of becoming hot in the soul of the sanctified.

The outward manifestation of both feelings are so very similar that to an onlooker, and especially to a critic, one may be mistaken for the other. Jesus is our perfect example; and see how both the gentler and the sterner virtues were illustrated in Him.

Suppose He should come to one of His churches when a tea-meeting was in progress for the purpose of making money; or when a bazaar was holding in the Holy Temple, or when a voting contest was on; or an auction sale of pews, or any of the modern devices for raising church funds; and suppose, in the midst of all, He should overthrow the money tables, and at the end of a whip, drive out of His Father's house those who bought and those who sold; there are some among us, as in days of old, who would say He was possessed with a devil; such are the improper ideas we have of holiness and purity.

"The disciple is not above His Master," and "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub how much more shall they call them of His household?"

In making us holy God destroys in us *only* sin, and not any quality of mind or heart that makes for righteousness.

3. Again, some think if we become holy that it is an experience which makes it impossible for us to sin. With this view of holiness they oppose the doctrine as unscriptural, and contrary to the experience of the best of men.

If this were a correct view, I, too, should oppose it, but it is not a correct view.

I have never heard such an opinion advanced by any of the advocates of the higher life. The blessing of heart purity is obtained and retained by faith, and if its possessor lets go the faith, he also loses the experience, and retrogrades to his old life and condition. It is not said, that a man may not sin, but that he need not, and will not, so long as his faith remains linked to God's omnipotence.

4. Others again, think the experience now advocated, is a point beyond which we cannot go, and as they believe in eternal progress, they oppose the doctrine also. This again is a man of straw. No person advocates such a theory and it is another example of mental confusion.

The Christian heart may be compared to a flower garden, in which all the beautiful flowers of the Christ-life are planted and growing. These plants of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, were planted by the Holy Ghost at the time of conversion. Soon after the experience of the new birth, the Christian realized to his utter dismay, that there were other and contrary plants in his heart, to the fragrant and beautiful flowers just mentioned. There was doubt and fear, envy and strife, pride and petulance, and other similar briars and weeds, occupying the same ground with the rarest and most costly of flowers.

Now, what is contended is, that the good gardner can and will, pluck up all these briars and weeds, and will leave the ground in possession of the flowers alone.

Please distinguish between two things entirely different, and that is the pulling up of the weeds, and the growth of the flowers.

The garden will be perfectly free of weeds, but the flowers will grow and become more and more beautiful, and will emit ever increasing fragrance so long as "the sun and moon endure"; and when they "Shall wax old like a garment and as a vesture they shall be changed," these heavenly flowers will but have begun to bloom in the paradise of God.

Holiness includes perfect moral purity through the blood of Jesus, applied by faith in an instant through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, but it also includes eternal progress.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen."

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